

# Top 5 Architectural Trends for Homes

## Universal Design High on Minds of Baby Boomers

BY WANDA PERKINS

**PINK-TILED** bathrooms...groovy wallpapers...king-sized blueprints—home trends have definitely changed. What are today's architectural home trends? What do homeowners desire most?

Five trends homeowners seek are universal design; greener homes; maximum efficiency; outdoor living spaces; and smaller homes with bigger functionality.



↑ Energy efficient windows, natural flooring, and an arched ceiling—with ceiling fan to provide fresh air control—make for a comfortable, inviting space. Design by Trillium Architects.



1

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The importance of accessible floor plans for all ages and abilities is essential. As baby boomers age, this architectural trend will reign.

“Homeowners want safety, convenience, durability and style,” says John Salmen, AIA, president of Universal Designers & Consultants, Inc. “Accessible routes that connect critical home areas to outdoor sidewalks, egress doors or windows on every level, and adaptable components that fit into spaces (appliances and cabinetry) all demonstrate universal design. Sharing clear floor spaces for multiple elements is another key design technique for reducing footprints while maintaining functionality.”



↑ ↑ Multi-height counters, open shelving for everyday dishes and utensils, convenient pull-out carts and accessible seated work areas make this kitchen a dream design.

↑ Dual-height sinks allow children, wheelchair users and standing adults convenient access to faucets and basins.

2

### GREENER HOMES

Green home building remains popular and will likely continue for decades. “Cost efficiencies and health concerns are driving forces in green building,” explains Elizabeth DiSalvo, Principal and Registered Architect at Trillium Architects. “Once valued ‘advanced technologies’ in anything from detergents to house paint, flooring to siding, consumers realize that toxins should be avoided. With some forethought, we can create super efficient healthy homes.”

“You have to start with your envelope—the basement, walls and roof. A well-sealed envelope will get the best return on your investment,” DiSalvo says. “The greatest investment in your home is usually hidden in the walls; the insulation, air barriers, vapor barriers, thermal bridging, R-values, double pane windows, etc. These things are often hard to describe in cocktail party conversation and seem like ‘no fun,’ but they’ll make you a great energy efficient green home. Green building is simply building well.”



### MAXIMUM EFFICIENT HOMES

Hurricanes, sub-zero temperatures, humidity and heat waves—today’s homes must successfully weather the elements. Building maximum efficient homes saves homeowners costly energy bills. “Energy costs are going up and aren’t projected to decrease. Therefore, it makes long-term sense for homeowners to build energy efficiency into their homes,” note Kevin and Tammy Sternberg, Owners of Countryside Builders.

“For one-half percent of a total home’s cost, homeowners can reduce their heating and

← Top quality low E coating windows absorb the sun’s warmth and reduce damaging UV rays. Argon-filled glass insulates, saving energy dollars during hot summer days while lowering heating costs during cold winter months.

cooling bill by 30 to 50 percent,” Kevin adds. “This means for about \$500-\$1,000 in insulation upgrades, homeowners can generate significant savings. It’s a small price to pay for such a large impact.”

Today’s Energy Star rated appliances, high efficiency heating and cooling systems, and low-E and insulating argon filled glass windows and doors are super efficient. All work together to maximize efficiency while protecting us from all outside elements.



Outdoor seating areas, decks, grills, cozy fireplaces, fire pits and pool areas beacon us all to come, sit and enjoy the great outdoors.

### OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES

Open decks, porches, sitting areas, fireplaces and fire pits are becoming increasingly popular. “Outdoor space is really just another room,” says Jeremy Henri, owner of LD Erickson, Inc. “It’s a great investment, as clients are seeing returns on their property for outdoor living space between 90 and 100 percent.”

“Outdoor living spaces bring family and friends closer together,” Henri notes. “It allows them a place to relax under a gazebo, sit in a rocker chair, read and just enjoy the outdoors and all that God has created.”



### SMALLER HOMES: BIGGER FUNCTIONALITY

“Eliminating the formal dining room in favor of one eating area open to the kitchen fits the less formal lifestyle now prevalent,” says Lex Stapleton, senior architect at Donald A. Gardner, Inc. “Jack and Jill baths shared by two bedrooms also save floor space and plumbing requirements while providing private personal space.”

The “bigger is better” mind-set prevalent a few years ago has waned. “Whether it’s environmental awareness or reaction to economic difficulties,” Stapleton adds, “it’s clear within the home market that with efficient use of space, smaller homes can live bigger than they seem.”

Utilizing these trends, in conjunction with aesthetic design, quality materials and workmanship, will ensure your home will be a place that generations will enjoy. Trends continue to change over the decades, although a few remain unchanged. Our homes provide a peaceful retreat, an escape from the demands of the outside world. They’re the place memories are made, hearts are connected and loved ones return. These trends remain truly timeless. ✨

↑ A pitched ceiling and an open floor plan give the illusion of a bigger kitchen. The island provides extra cabinetry, while seating provides a connectedness to the open living room.